

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 08683 142032Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-07 ARAE-00 /063 W

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P R 141958Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2516
AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8683

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PFOR EC PE
SUBJ: ECUADOR BELIEVES PERU IS MOBILIZING ON ITS BORDER

1. THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE DEC.
13 FOR THE SECOND TIME IN LESS THAN A WEEK TO PLEAD WITH
ME TO SPEED UP THE DELIVERY OF WEAPONS ORDERED THROUGH
FMS. HE SAID THAT THE GOE HAD INFORMATION THAT PERU WAS
MOBILIZING TROOPS ALONG THE ECUADOREAN BORDER. THE GOE
WAS SO CONCERNED THAT IT WAS THINKING OF SENDING HIM TO
WASHINGTON TO MAKE A DIRECT APPEAL TO THE SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE TO SHORTEN DELIVERY TIMES.

2. I TOLD THE MINISTER THAT EVER SINCE I HAD ARRIVED HERE
I HAD HEARD RUMORS CIRCULATING AMONG THE ECUADOREANS
ABOUT PERUVIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS WHICH PRESAGED SOME THREAT
TO ECUADOR. I REALLY FAILED TO SEE HOW ANYONE COULD GIVE
THESE CREDENCE. PERU ALREADY HAD ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF WHAT
ECUADOR CONSIDERED ITS TERRITORY. WHY WOULD THEY WISH
TO ATTACK ECUADOR? I SAID THAT THE USG HAD ALREADY TAKEN
EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES ON BEHALF OF ECUADOR IN PROVIDING
AN IMPACT SHIPMENT OF ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, WHICH WOULD ARRIVE
WITHIN ONE MONTH. THE LEAD TIME ON THE OTHER ITEMS WAS
SOMETHING THAT NO ONE COULD REALLY DO ANYTHING ABOUT,
EXCEPT TO BE SURE THAT THE ORDERS WERE PROCESSED EFFICIENTLY--
WHICH WE WERE DOING. I SAID THAT I WAS AFRAID THAT HE
WOULD BE SIMPLY WASTING HIS TIME IF HE WERE TO GO TO WASH-
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PAGE 02 QUITO 08683 142032Z

INGTON. THE MINISTER SEEMED TO AGREE WITH ME; IN PROPOSING

SUCH A TRIP TO ME, HE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY SIMPLY FOLLOWING ORDERS.

3. WE HAVE OTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE ECUADOREAN ARMED FORCES ARE TAKING THIS LATEST PERUVIAN "THREAT" VERY SERIOUSLY. OUR SERVICE ATTACHES PERSONALLY CONFIRMED YESTERDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ENTIRE GALAPAGOS BRIGADE, ECUADOR'S ARMORED UNIT, IS MOVING SOUTH FROM RIOBAMBA TOWARD THE BORDER. GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS HAVE ALSO BEEN INSISTING TO SERVICE ATTACHES IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, THAT ECUADOR POSSESSES INTELLIGENCE THAT 30,000 PERUVIAN TROOPS AND ONE TANK BATTALLION ARE POISED FOR AN INVASION IN JANUARY 1977 IN CONECTION WITH A SIMULTANEOUS ATTACK ON CHILE. OUR MILITARY LIAISON OFFICE IS BEING ASKED TO ASSIST IN RUSHING TO THE ECUADOREAN AIR FORCE MUNITIONS WHICH ARE ALREADY ENROUTE TO ECUADOR. UNDOUBTEDLY THESE FEARS OF A PERUVIAN ATTACK ARE HEIGHTENED BY THE RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH ECUADOR DISINVITED PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ, FOLLOWED BY THE SUDDEN RETURN TO LIMA OF THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR AND HIS MILITARY ATTACHES.

4. COMMENT: WHILE WE DO NOT GIVE CREDENCE TO THESE ECUADOREAN FEARS, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF EMBASSY LIMA COULD PROVIDE US WITH ANY INFORMATION REGARDING RECENT PERUVIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS THAT MIGHT, ALTHOUGH CARRIED OUT FOR OTHER REASONS, GIVEN THE ECUADOREANS THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMETHING WAS AFOOT.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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